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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a study that assessed the attitude of pre- and post-student teachers toward individualizing instruction. The subjects were 110 secondary school student teachers. The research instrument was the individualized Instruction Inventory, designed to provide a total individualization score and reveal attitudes toward individualizing instruction in four specific areas: a) intra-class grouping; b) variety of materials; c) student autonomy; d) differentiating assignments. The study included the following findings: student teachers were more positive in their attitude toward individualized instruction before student teaching than they were after student teaching; both pre- and post-student teaching females were more positive in their attitudes towards individualized instruction than were pre- and post-student teaching males. The authors suggest that part of the difficulty may be attributed to the cooperating teacher, who may have minimized the importance of individualizing instruction through both his attitude and classroom activity. A more careful selection of cooperating teachers is recommended and special efforts should be made in teacher preparation programs to educate males in the theory, philosophy, methods, and techniques of individualizing instruction. (JA)

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STUDENT TEACHING CASTS DOUBTS ABOUT INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION

An apparent by-product of the trend toward humanizing education has been an increased emphasis upon individualizing instruction in today's schools. If this emphasis is to result in actual implementation of individualized instruction in the classroom, both pre-service and in-service teachers must become convinced that individualizing instruction is a feasible and viable alternative to traditional methods. As a first step toward implementing individualized instruction in public schools, teacher attitude toward individualized instruction should be measured.

To this end, the authors recently conducted a study in which they assessed the attitude of pre and post student teachers toward individualizing instruction. The subjects in the study were 110 secondary school student teachers who were enrolled in student teaching during the fall semester of 1973-74. The research instrument, the Individualized Instruction Inventory, was designed to reveal attitudes toward individualizing instruction in each of four specific areas, plus providing a total individualization score. The four areas were: (1) intra-class grouping (2) variety of materials (3) student autonomy and (4) differentiating assignments.

The findings of the study were numerous, but the most significant include the following:

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1) Student teachers were more positive in their attitude toward individualized instruction before student teaching than they were after student teaching.

2) Pre student teaching females were more positive in their attitude toward individualized instruction than were pre student teaching males.

3) Post student teaching females were more positive in their attitude toward individualized instruction than were post student teaching males.

The findings suggest that while student teachers may recognize the importance of individualizing instruction prior to student teaching, the reality of difficulties in doing so for large numbers of students resulted in doubt and apprehension as to the feasibility of individualizing instruction. Part of the difficulty may be attributed to the cooperating teacher, who may have minimized the importance of individualizing instruction through both his attitude and classroom activity.

The fact that females had a more positive attitude than males toward individualizing instruction, both before and after student teaching, may be due to the nature of the female. That is, females are normally more nurturant, more caring, and manifest more warmth in their interpersonal relationships than males, and since individualizing instruction is predicated on meeting individual needs, this appears to be one possible answer. In addition, through her caring attitude the female may not only sense a greater need for individualized instruction, but also strive to act upon this need to a greater extent than her male counterpart.

The most significant finding of this study is that student teachers were more positive toward individualizing instruction before student

teaching than after student teaching. It is apparent that events during the student teaching experience negatively affected student teacher attitudes toward individualizing instruction.

As a result of this study, the authors recommend a more careful selection of cooperating teachers (those who themselves are favorably disposed toward individualizing instruction), and that special efforts should be made in teacher preparation programs in educating males in the theory, philosophy, methods, and techniques in individualizing instruction.

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HOW WELL IS INSTRUCTION BEING INDIVIDUALIZED?

DIRECTIONS: This inventory is an attempt to assess the attitudes of teachers toward individualizing instruction. You are asked to circle the number on each five point scale below that best describes your attitude toward each of the statements. It should be clear in your mind that you are NOT to consider each statement as it should be but simply how you feel about it.

	5	4	3	2	1
a. Advanced level or enrichment work	Nearly half of the pupils should do advanced level or enrichment work		Several pupils should do advanced level or enrichment work		No pupil should do advanced level or enrichment work
b. Furniture arrangement	Desks and chairs should be arranged in varying patterns for a variety of types of work		At least one special arrangement should be provided for group work		All desks and chairs should be arranged in rank-and-file or other uniform pattern
c. Materials used	All pupils should work with materials that reflect different levels of difficulty		Nearly half the pupils should use materials reflecting several different levels of difficulty		All pupils should use the same materials
d. Pupils lead the class	Teacher should arrange for one or more pupils to lead the class or a group for a substantial period of time		One or more pupils should be permitted to lead the class or a group but only for brief moments		No pupil should be permitted to lead the class or a group
e. Assignments	Identical assignments should be given only to small groups		Identical assignments should be given to all of the class only occasionally		All pupils should be given identical assignments most of the time
f. Independent study	Pupils should work in small groups with little directions for prolonged periods of time		Most pupils should work independently in small groups for short periods of time		Pupils should work in small or large groups under the direction of the teacher at all times
g. Reference material is in use by both the teacher and the pupil	Encyclopedias, supplementary texts, atlases, and other materials available should be used extensively		Encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc., should be used but in limited ways		Little or no reference material should be used

h, Pupil assistance	5 4 Pupils should frequently help each other in constructive ways		3 2 Pupils should help each other on occasion	1 Pupils should attend strictly to their own individual tasks
i. Pupils and routine duties	5 4 Systematic procedures should be employed to assure each student an opportunity to assume his share of responsibility		3 2 Students should have opportunities to share in assuming routine responsibilities but this is not systematic or assured	1 There should be little or no pupil sharing of routine duties
j. Movement within the class	5 4 Pupils should be permitted to change work stations as needs arise		3 2 Teacher should suggest or approve all changes made in work stations	1 Pupils should remain at work stations for nearly all activities
k. Teacher-made materials	5 4 These materials should be used frequently and in great variety		3 2 These materials should be used periodically but only in limited variety	1 These materials should be used for nearly all activities
l. Pupils help in planning activities	5 4 All pupils should be actively involved in short and long-range planning		3 2 Pupils should be permitted to offer suggestions for teacher planning	1 Pupils should be permitted little or no opportunity to help with planning
m. Pupil participation	5 4 All pupils should participate actively with purposes that challenge their abilities		3 2 Pupils should participate actively with purposes that challenge most	1 Pupils should participate passively with purposes that challenge only a few
n. Intra-class groups	5 4 Groups should range from one person to as many as half the class		3 2 Groups should vary in size but only two or three groups should be employed	1 No intra-class grouping should be employed
o. Variety of newspapers, pamphlets, and magazines	5 4 Pupils should regularly use a variety of magazines and newspapers as a part of class		3 2 Pupils should occasionally use few newspapers and magazines	1 Pupils should rarely use newspapers or magazines
p. Pupil interest	5 4 Nearly every pupil should reflect interest in the assigned work		3 2 Most pupils should reflect interest in the assigned work	1 Most pupils should reflect little or no interest in assigned work

		5	4	3	2	1
q.	Pupil errors	Pupils should be encouraged to find and correct their own mistakes and to look for reasons		The teacher should point out errors and ask pupils to correct them		The teacher should find and correct mistakes for pupils
r.	Intra-class groupings	Small groups should be formed and changed frequently to serve a variety of instructional purposes		Small groups should be formed and changed occasionally for some special purpose		Small groups, if formed, should be fairly permanent arrangements and retained for months
s.	Library books	Pupils should use a wide variety of library books both within and outside the classroom		Pupils should use a variety of library books as recreational reading but sparingly for class assignments		Pupils should make limited use of library books
t.	Pupil responsibility	The teacher should leave pupils free to carry out assignments independently		The teacher should give advice to pupils while assignments are being carried out		The teacher should closely direct, check, and advise pupils while assignments are being carried out

PROFILE FOR INDIVIDUALIZATION

Directions:

Analyze the ratings previously made.* Transfer the numerical rating for each item to the corresponding blank below. Sum the ratings for each cluster of items, and enter these totals in the boxes at the right designated A, B, C, and D. Sum all ratings for the total in the last box.

Class_____ Date_____

Ratings by_____

A. Intra-Class Grouping

Items:
- b. Furniture arrangement . . . . . _____
- f. Independent work . . . . . _____
- j. Free movement . . . . . _____
- n. Group size . . . . . _____
- r. Group flexibility . . . . . _____

A ☐

B. Variety of Materials

Items:
- c. Different levels . . . . . _____
- g. Reference materials . . . . . _____
- k. Teacher-made materials . . . . . _____
- o. Periodicals . . . . . _____
- s. Library books . . . . . _____

B ☐

C. Pupil Autonomy

Items:
- d. Pupil leadership . . . . . _____
- h. Mutual assistance . . . . . _____
- i. Pupil planning . . . . . _____
- p. Self-evaluation . . . . . _____
- t. Pupil responsibility . . . . . _____

C ☐

D. Differentiated Assignments

Items:
- a. Advance or enriched . . . . . _____
- e. Variety . . . . . _____
- l. Routine duties . . . . . _____
- m. Active, challenging, and purposeful . . . _____
- q. Interesting . . . . . _____

D ☐

TOTAL INDIVIDUALIZATION . . . . . ☐